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Sommario/riassunto

Is all knowledge the product of thought? Or can the physical interactions of the body with the world produce reliable knowledge? In late-nineteenth-century Europe, scientists, artists, and other intellectuals theorized the latter as a new way of knowing, which Zeynep Çelik Alexander here dubs "kinaesthetic knowing." In this book, Alexander offers the first major intellectual history of kinaesthetic knowing and its influence on the formation of modern art and architecture and especially modern design education. Focusing in particular on Germany and tracing the story up to the start of World War II, Alexander reveals the tension between intellectual meditation and immediate experience to be at the heart of the modern discourse of aesthetics, playing a major part in the artistic and teaching practices of numerous key figures of the period, including Heinrich Wölfflin, Hermann Obrist, August Endell, László Moholy-Nagy, and many others. Ultimately, she shows, kinaesthetic knowing did not become the foundation of the human sciences, as some of its advocates had hoped, but it did lay the groundwork-at such institutions as the Bauhaus-for modern art and architecture in the twentieth century.

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